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JOB ENRICHMENT: SOME CAREER CONSIDERATIONS

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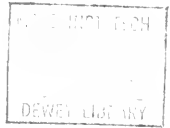
Ralph Katz

June 1975

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JOB ENRICHMENT: SOME CAREER CONSIDERATIONS

Ralph Katz

"... to crush, to annihilate a man utterly, to inflict on him the most terrible of punishments, ... one need only give work of an absolutely, completely useless and irrational character."

- Dostoevsky

I. An Overview

Over the past decade or so, there has been increasing interest expressed in what has come to be called, "the quality of work life." Under this umbrella-like concept, one finds a host of normative models all designed to alter and improve the conditions under which work in this society is performed. Of these various models, job enrichment or work redesign is by and large the most visible, if not the most popular, reform methodology.

Work satisfaction represents one yardstick by which researchers have tried to assess and gauge the effects of job conditions upon individuals. While the interpretation of high satisfaction scores is somewhat ambiguous, low satisfaction scores usually signify some costly and disrupting problem, incongruency, or conflict situation between employees and the employer. Furthermore, evidence accumulated from a variety of settings suggests that low satisfaction has a substantially adverse impact upon individual and collective behavior both inside and outside the workplace. Perhaps the most disturbing data, albeit controversial, have been summarized in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's task force report Work in America (1973) and in Jenkin's Job Power (1974).<sup>1</sup>

However, empirical studies documenting distressing levels of worker dissatisfaction, together with warnings of further erosion, are probably not sufficient in and of themselves to have aroused the attention presently commanded by the quality of work life issues. What has been most impressive of late are the dramatic recounts of gains achieved through programs of job enrichment -- programs developed explicitly to counteract worker alienation and enhance intrinsic motivation by redesigning the various tasks workers



perform in their everyday activities (Glaser, 1975; Walton, 1972; Ford, 1969). Thus, it is the possibility that some concrete actions can be taken to improve work environments and rejuvenate workers that has provoked intense interest and excitement.<sup>2</sup> Yet, despite the apparent fruitful yields from these experimental programs, relatively few of the nation's large corporations have tried to implement comparable job enrichment programs. One survey, Luthans (1974), places the figure at around 4%. And, even within these experimenting organizations, only a small minority of their total labor force has been affected. In short, despite all of the theory and professed interest in job enrichment, it has barely managed to dent the "quality of work life in America."

One of the biggest roadblocks to the implementation of job enrichment -- even after knowledge of its experimental successes has been diffused -- is tied to the knotty problem of transposing the results from specific case studies to other locales.<sup>3</sup> In order to achieve this "know-how," a broader, more inclusive theoretical and methodological framework is needed from which cross-organizational generalizations can be made concerning the reactions of employees to specific task dimensions over time and under varied work conditions. An important step towards this methodological direction has been made by J. Richard Hackman and his colleagues at Yale University. They have designed a diagnostic survey instrument to measure the degree to which certain conceptually independent task characteristics are present on particular jobs (Hackman and Oldham, 1975). This instrument quantifies the distinct job attributes of a) skill variety; b) task identity; c) task significance; d) autonomy, and e) feedback-from-job. These dimensions presumably coincide with certain psychological states -- meaningfulness, responsibility, and knowledge of results -- experienced by individuals which, according to the developing theory, are critical for attaining and sustaining high employee motivation, satisfaction, and commitment.<sup>4</sup>

Preliminary survey results confirm that these job characteristics, especially autonomy and skill variety, are correlated strongly with general work satisfaction and are related moderately (but significantly) to absenteeism, overall performance effectiveness, and the quality of performance (Hackman and Lawler, 1971; Van Maanen and Katz, 1974). Such findings are encouraging but we still know little about the behavior of these relationships from a long-range, temporal standpoint. The few longitudinal studies



available typically provide only pre- and post- measures (within a very restricted time-frame) as a means of tracking the effectiveness of a particular organizational change program. As such, they are not concerned with how employees react to the various task dimensions over a career span. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to empirically explore the linkages between work satisfaction and particular job attributes over a broad temporal horizon. That is, how do employees react to certain commonly examined task dimensions throughout their careers -- are the relationships stable and invariant, or is there some vacillating pattern that demands further elaboration and explanation.

## II. Theoretical Background: The Loci Model Across Time

Theorists involved in the study of work satisfaction tend to emphasize particular aspects of the employment situation at the expense of others. For instance, proponents of job enrichment or redesign efforts -- usually the domain of the applied behavioral scientist -- assume that the set of daily tasks performed by employees are most related to their reported satisfaction level. At the same time, advocates of the group process or human relations school of thought, primarily the management or personnel specialist, postulate that the interpersonal context of work environments contribute the most to individual satisfaction. Finally, a third approach can be detected and labelled "structuralist." Those supporting this third approach, frequently the labor relations expert or union leader, argue persuasively that the organization's (or industry's) policies regarding pay, advancement, scheduling, and so forth are the primary elements associated with employee satisfaction. Without detailing the more general theories that support these positions, it seems likely that the applicability of each approach shifts or fluctuates throughout the course of employee careers. Hence, the relative capacity of any of these models for explaining job satisfaction may change over time, either increasing or decreasing in strength.

In a previous study, Katz and Van Maanen (1974) derived empirically a tripart locus of work satisfaction involving job properties, interactional features, and organization policy variables. The study supported the contention that work satisfaction is associated with each of the three generic theories mentioned above. Yet, no one theory in and of itself was sufficient





to interpret the data. The three theories were defined operationally and each was considered to be a major locus of work satisfaction. Briefly, the three loci are:

1. Job Properties: Characteristics of the everyday task processes involved in a particular line of work.
2. Interactional Features: Characteristics of the day-to-day supervision, agent-client dealings, interpersonal feedback, colleague relationships, and so on.
3. Organizational Policies: Characteristics of the policies enforced in the workplace regarding compensation, promotion, training, and the like.

Each of these loci was shown to be analytically distinct and related to conceptually objective role design features. The task design features of skill variety, identity, significance, autonomy, and feedback from job were linked only to the satisfaction locus of job properties. Face-to-face dealings, such as feedback from supervisor, were aligned **exclusively** with the interactional context locus. And, an additional group of role design features, promotion fairness for example, was associated uniquely with organizational policy satisfaction.

Katz and Van Maanen (1974) argue from these findings that job enrichment is indeed not a panacea for every situation of low satisfaction simply because it is only an appropriate remedy for one of the three possible sources of trouble. In effect, they suggest that in any program aimed at influencing work satisfaction, explicit attention must be paid to all three explanatory loci and corresponding design features. Standing by itself, therefore, job enrichment is limited in scope, pertinence, and effectiveness. Work redesign programs must broaden their focus from concentrating purely on task dimensions to emphasizing all features of work roles, including the interactional and organizational aspects. Consequently, we must shift from programs emphasizing task redesign to programs of role redesign where the concept of role encompasses all three satisfaction loci.

But even this extension is insufficient if it fails to consider the nature of the relationships between role characteristics and work satisfaction over time. In other words, we must investigate and decipher the emerging patterns of influence exhibited by the role design features -- those affiliated with the satisfaction loci -- throughout one's career, from initial entry to eventual retirement. Of course, these patterns may



be constant or dynamic and vary from person to person. However, the point is simply that it is necessary to view the loci from a developmental perspective.<sup>5</sup>

Social scientists interested in socialization processes have long been aware of such temporal considerations. In particular, the work of Parsons (1951) and Brim (1966) draws explicit attention to the changing nature of an individual's relationship to the workplace over the course of one's career. More specifically, it has been demonstrated in a variety of work settings that employee needs change in relative importance during their early career years (Van Maanen, 1975; Hall and Nougaim, 1968; Berlew and Hall, 1966). These writers argue that an employee's dominant need upon entering an organization is one of job safety and security. In a similar vein, Schein (1961) suggests that to be accepted by others in the organization as a contributing member ("to prove oneself") represents the major problem faced by a newcomer. It would seem therefore that only after grappling with the problem of establishing a somewhat stable situational identity can the newcomer turn to other matters such as achievement, challenge, and innovation.<sup>6</sup> In other words, people must determine what it is they are to do before they can decide how well to do it.

Some perspective on the nature of individual changes across the career can be gained by relating the loci model to Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs theory. Thus, for example, if an individual were progressing up the need hierarchy, one would expect that the relative influence of each loci upon satisfaction would also be shifting -- from a concern for organizational policies, to a concern with the interactional context, to a concern for job properties. Presumably, the longer employees have been at their jobs, the more their needs for pay, security, and fellowship have been fulfilled; hence, they should be advancing up the need hierarchy. One might reason, therefore, that the relationship between overall work satisfaction and each of the task dimensions mentioned by Hackman and Oldham (1975) to increase in strength with prolonged periods of job longevity (i.e., longevity being defined simply by the length of time an individual has been working on the same job). The critical implication is that employees may be amenable to job redesign efforts only during particular phases of their organizational careers -- a fact of obvious significance for both theorists and practitioners of job enrichment. Furthermore, there is little reason to believe



that the influence of various task features operate with equal strength during particular career stages. Different task dimensions may be more powerful at different career points.

### III. Research Design

In order to test some of the notions discussed above, data collected from a large attitude survey (administered between October, 1973 and February, 1974) were analyzed for temporal implications. The guiding purpose behind the analysis was simply to investigate the patterns of relationship between overall work satisfaction and each of the role design features (allied with a particular locus) across separate groups of employees distinguished by different lengths of job longevity -- job longevity was defined as the length of time an individual had been working on the same job. An emphasis was placed, however, upon the temporal affects of the task characteristics (Job Property locus), for such characteristics represent the primary thrust of job enlargement programs.

The survey was undertaken in four distinct governmental organizations as part of a project designed to examine job satisfaction in the public sector. Each of the governments represents a rather loose confederation of various service departments operating within clearly defined geographical regions (e.g., police and fire departments, public utilities, hospitals, social work agencies, sanitation departments, planning departments, and so on). Within each organization, a stratified random sample was drawn from among the full range of jobs and employees. The stratification was based on the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) occupational categories: administrative, technical, professional, protective service, paraprofessional, clerical, skilled craft, and maintenance. Of the total sample of 3,500 employees, 88% completed the survey instrument. For a more complete discussion of the sampling, see Van Maanen and Katz (1974).

For the present analysis, only three portions of the survey instrument are pertinent: (1) role design features; (2) overall work satisfaction; and (3) longevity measures. The Yale Job Inventory, discussed in detail by Hackman and Oldham (1975), was used to determine the "objective" task characteristics of the respondents' jobs. According to Hackman and Lawler (1971), this instrument provides a reasonably accurate -- insofar as self,



peer, supervisor, and outside observer ratings of a job converge -- description of the following task dimensions:

1. Skill Variety: The degree to which the job requires different activities calling for the use of different skills.
2. Task Identity: The degree to which the job requires the completion of a "whole" and identifiable piece of work -- i.e., doing a job from beginning to end with a clear outcome.
3. Task Significance: The degree to which the job has a perceptible impact on other people or their jobs, whether in the immediate organization or the community at large.
4. Autonomy: The degree to which the job provides an employee with freedom, independence, and discretion in scheduling and carrying out work assignments.
5. Feedback-from-Job: The degree to which an employee receives information from the job itself as to the effectiveness of his or her efforts.

Other work role factors -- "feedback-from-agents" and "promotion fairness" -- were also measured in this study. These role design characteristics tap the loci of the interactional context and organizational policy, respectively. They were defined as follows:

6. Feedback-from-Agents: The degree to which an employee receives clear information about his or her performance effectiveness from co-workers or supervisors.
7. Promotion Fairness: The degree to which advancement procedures are standardized, i.e., apply equally to all employees.

All of the above dimensions were measured by use of 7-point, Likert-type items. Overall work satisfaction was measured by an 8-point, Likert-type scale ranging from completely dissatisfied to completely satisfied.

Finally, respondents were asked to answer a number of demographic questions including age, sex, current job longevity, and time spent in the organization. The results that follow are based only upon the male portion of the sample (N=2,084).<sup>7</sup>

#### IV. Data Analysis and Results

Table 1 demonstrates that each of the role design features was indeed associated with overall work satisfaction. The five task dimensions, feedback-from-agents, and promotion fairness were correlated positively and significantly with global satisfaction.<sup>8</sup>





[Insert Table 1 about here]

From these correlations, overall satisfaction appears equally sensitive to each of the five task characteristics, slightly more related to feedback-from-agents, and most associated with promotion fairness.<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, one might conclude that the satisfaction level of a group of individuals can be enhanced if proper improvements are made in any of the role design features.

As shown in Table 2, however, the real world is considerably more complex. By calculating separate correlations for employees with different job longevities, it becomes clear that none of the design features are uniformly related to overall satisfaction. Specifically, the correlational results suggest that the satisfaction of employees who are just beginning work on a particular job (less than three months) is not associated with the amount of skill variety, task identity, or autonomy on the job. If anything, high autonomy may be distressing for the employee as shown by the negative correlation. At the same time, the other two task characteristics -- task significance and feedback-from-job -- are related positively to overall satisfaction.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Following this initial adjustment period, however, the correlations for most role design features increase in significance, peak in strength somewhere around two years, and subsequently decline in importance.<sup>10</sup> Correlations for those employees who have been assigned the same job for at least fifteen years do not reveal any relationship between overall satisfaction and the various task characteristics. Thus, the consequences of simply having the same job for a long period of time apparently counteract the constructive effects of having high skill variety, high task identity, high task significance, high feedback-from-job, and high autonomy.<sup>11</sup> Figure 1 displays in graphic form the over time correlations between overall satisfaction and both skill variety and autonomy -- the two task characteristics considered by most theorists to be the essence of job enrichment.

[Insert Figure 1]

Employees hold new jobs either because they are new to the organization (novices) or because they have recently been promoted or transferred (veterans).



For my purposes here, the term socialization will refer to the former condition, while the latter situation is labelled re-socialization. Importantly, it has been suggested that the experiences associated with these two processes are not identical; thus, they need to be examined separately (Wheeler, 1966). In socialization situations, the novice must learn about and adjust to the organization from scratch. Such a process requires that the newcomer must sift and digest large amounts of sometimes vague and ambiguous information in order to discover where he fits in the overall scheme of the organization -- finding a "niche" (See Van Maanen, Chapter 2). Consequently, the novice must build social as well as task relationships in order to sustain and nourish his new existence.

The transferred or promoted employee also undergoes an initial learning phase to restore the temporary loss of the familiar. But, in contrast to the novice, employees in a re-socialization situation have already acquired a sizeable knowledge base about the organization, established contacts within the organization, and developed some sort of personal reputation. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that novices will be more responsive to the social issues ("getting on board"), while the veterans will be more sensitive to the task performance issues ("doing a good job"). Table 3 presents a comparative analysis of the socialization and re-socialization processes where novices are those employees new to the organization and, of course, new to their job, and veterans are those employees new to their jobs, but who have been with the organization for at least five years.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

Table 3 shows three major differences (in terms of job properties) when individual correlations are calculated to distinguish between socialization and re-socialization. (1) Only task significance and overall satisfaction are significantly correlated for novices in the early months of their organizational careers. This finding supports the contention that it is more essential for novices than for veterans changing jobs to feel that they are becoming integrated within and accepted by the organization. (2) In contrast, the task dimension, feedback-from-job, seems most germane during the first year of a re-socialization situation. It appears that veterans might be more anxious than novices to ascertain quickly how well they are performing or can perform on their new jobs. (3) Employees undergoing a re-socialization transition are not necessarily stimulated by



a high degree of autonomy on a new job. It seems that they must reestablish a sense of security in the workplace. On the other hand, neither are veterans as "turned off" by high autonomy as are the organizational novices.

#### V. Discussion

These findings suggest that there may be some serious weaknesses associated with job enrichment programs -- with respect to both theory and practice. Current ideology contends that, in general, employees will respond positively (in terms of satisfaction, motivation, commitment, etc.) to appropriate increases in the various task dimensions. They survey results presented here also noted the correlational linkage between satisfaction and task characteristics, but, at the same time demonstrated the dependency of such relationships upon job longevity. Jobs featuring more autonomy, variety, identity, significance, and/or feedback do not necessarily evoke greater overall satisfaction -- especially for employees with either very new or very old jobs. Consequently, to trust correlations that represent aggregations over eventful and important time or career periods is misleading and no longer justifiable.

The inescapable implication of these results is that job enrichment programs are potentially limited and of short-lived effectiveness. Jobs, no doubt, can be richly reconstructed along appropriate task dimensions and, hopefully, after a short period, employees will perhaps demonstrate the anticipated positive outcomes. However, there is little reason to believe that even the most enriched jobs will not eventually become routinized and boring as employees become more proficient and accustomed to their redesigned tasks. Hence, longitudinal considerations must be included when advocating a tactic of improving work satisfaction through job redesign.

Further complications arise even if one assumes, as many do, that proper job enrichment programs are not "one-shot" occurrences -- the routinization issue addressed through the periodic re-enrichment of jobs. Yet as the data suggest, greater amounts of skill variety or autonomy or identity may not have the same positive impact the second time around, particularly if the employees have the same job titles and positions. In fact, it may not have any overall constructive effects - recall that the relationships between task dimensions and overall satisfaction diminish



with increasing job longevity. Hence, the enduring effectiveness of continuous job enrichment efforts may be severely restricted.<sup>12</sup>

To be successful, therefore, we must broaden the theories, strategies, and concepts related to work motivation and satisfaction. Often, it is more than just the immediate task that is important. It is the individual's job position, organizational role, and career path (actual, as well as potential) which must be included in the overall framework. For example, Schein (Chapter 3) isolated five distinct managerial types, each of which was "anchored" by a different syndrome of talents, ambitions, and behavior styles. Thus, if organizations were to allow and legitimize alternative career tracks to satisfy these five very different career needs, the organization would be likely to be more attractive to more of its managerial employees. And certainly the same sort of considerations are as applicable to workers at the lower levels in organizations as they are to managers.

Certainly, neither the data nor the discussion is intended to dismiss the importance of or need for the design of jobs which include challenging and responsible tasks. The crux of the argument is simply that just having such jobs is not enough, for attention must be paid to job and career movements. Indeed, it is possible that these considerations will become even more crucial in the near future. Although empirical support is scanty, employees at all organizational levels seem to be shifting from an emphasis on the short-term, immediate rewards for their participation, to an emphasis on the long-term, career-related rewards (Lawler, 1975). Employees are thinking and planning further into the future. Increased life expectancies, society's emphasis on planning, early retirement, declining birth rates, and increased leisure time activities have all combined to enlarge the temporal perspective of today's labor force. Merely focusing on immediate tasks, therefore, does not take into account such a broadened horizon.

It is important to note also that the success of any job enrichment program depends not only on the validity of its theoretical foundation, but also on the worth of its particular implementation strategy as well. Hackman et al (1974) specified recently seven types of procedural errors that ostensibly invite failure. One such problem area occurs in the "assessment of readiness for change." The correlational results from the foregoing analysis support his concern. The readiness of employees to accept a high degree of autonomy (or additional amounts of autonomy) is perhaps the most crucial feature. Whenever job enrichment involves the placement of





individuals in new jobs, the amount of autonomy should be injected gradually, carefully, and with considerable support. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is not a "one-way" street and employees, regardless of their organizational tenure, emphasize their safety and security needs when undertaking a new job.

Theoretical advocates of job enrichment, such as Herzberg (1966), readily acknowledge and forewarn potential users to expect an initial, although temporary, setback resulting from early confusion and learning. Such introductory declines are also likely to be aggravated by the entrance of too much change, too much autonomy, or too much variety, especially since employees are probably experiencing a brief resurgence of lower-order needs. There is nothing to suggest, however, that a job must be enriched simultaneously along each of its deficient task dimensions. On the contrary, the results here indicate that it might be more effective initially to increase task significance in the case of socialization and to increase feedback-from-job in the case of re-socialization. This suggestion is consistent with the contention that when undertaking a new job, organizational veterans are more concerned with establishing and demonstrating their competence while novices are more concerned with becoming a helpful and needed part of the overall operation. In either case, the enrichment of a job along the autonomy and skill variety dimensions is not an immediate necessity and perhaps will be far more successful if introduced slowly during the first year of experience.

In situations where task dimensions are to be improved, but the job positions are to remain the same with the same personnel, employees must be assessed for receptiveness -- especially with regard to job longevity. The reader will recall that the correlations for the task design features of Table 2 diminish with increased longevity. Therefore, if the majority of affected employees have considerable job tenure, it is unlikely that a job enrichment program per se will have any predictable positive influence on overall work satisfaction. Furthermore, the amount of turnover in an enriched group of jobs can cause a reverse effect. Because the redesigned jobs are supposedly characterized by high autonomy, individual's "breaking-in" on these new jobs are likely to undergo a very stressful experience. In order to avoid this result, mitigating initiation methods would have to be developed and incorporated into the organization to help the individual



during the early socialization or re-socialization period.

Naturally, the greater the turnover, the more difficult and disrupting will be this continuous process of initial adjustment. Herein lies a potential contradiction, for as one strives to limit turnover for a redesigned job, one is increasing job longevity. And, as discussed, increased longevity eventually limits or inhibits the success of the program. Certainly low turnover is desirable and reducing turnover is a legitimate managerial objective, but too much stability can also be self-defeating. A job enrichment program should not discourage employees from wanting to shift jobs, nor should it be declared a failure if employees on jobs that have been enriched seek job changes. One must avoid the use of turnover as a uniform criterion of success.

#### VI. Summary and Conclusions

The analysis reported in this paper represents only a peek into the dynamic world of work. A great number of questions still remain unanswered and even unexplored. In connection with this study, some of the more important problems are as follows:

a) The findings reported here were based on cross-sectional and not panel data. Consequently, we can not really be sure about what happens to a designated group of individuals over time. What we do know from this study is that the relationships between the assorted task dimensions and general work satisfaction become progressively weaker as we examine different respondents with more job longevity. From these results, we can only infer that the relationships between the task dimensions and overall satisfaction will dissolve as job tenure increases. Carefully planned longitudinal studies are needed to clarify the situation.

b) The present analysis had focused exclusively on the modifying impact of job longevity. The demographic characteristic usually defined as either age, life stage, or career stage (i.e., early years, mid-years, and late years) is an additional variable that might moderate the relationships between overall satisfaction and the various design features. Investigators such as Porter (1961) and Hall and Mansfield (1975) have tried to show that the needs and interests of employees change as one ages. Job security seems, for example, to become more prominent as one gets older. The implication



is that the relevance of job enrichment would also vary with age or life stage. Since job tenure and age are connected, it is possible that age is the "true" moderator, or that age and job longevity, in some combination, both influence the investigated relationships. Preliminary inquiries into this issue reveal that the same pattern of results as shown in Table 2 re-emerge when separately computed for respondents under 35 years of age and for respondents over 35. Hence, it presently appears that job longevity is a more powerful moderator than age, although considerably more research is needed on the possible added influence of age or life stage.

c) Since the notion of a "new" job was a focal concept in the analysis, it is imperative that we determine exactly what constitutes a new job. In the current study, we relied on the respondents' own interpretations. However, we need to explicate what the elements, dimensions, or rules are that determine whether one job is the same or different from another. Such knowledge is essential if we hope to improve the quality of working life in organizations through a combination of role redesign, job shifts, and career movements.

d) In exploring the initial job longevity periods, the processes of socialization and re-socialization were differentiated. This is only one of several important distinctions. Under re-socialization, the transferred and promoted employees were all lumped together. They should be examined and treated separately. Similarly, novices with previous work experience may react differently from novices without prior employment. These issues have to be investigated and understood in order to design and implement a more suitable work environment.

These are only a few of the problematic issues that have to be resolved if the quality of working life is to be significantly improved. Enriched roles, together with appropriate career paths (both horizontal and vertical), are more likely to achieve and sustain the desired level of work satisfaction. Finally, these conclusions are, as in most empirical studies, guilty of being deduced from the averaged responses of large numbers of respondents. Each individual employee has his personal mental image, his own "road map" of the organization. Moreover, some of the road crossings, and stopover places are more attractive to him than others. In addition, he has some notions about when, how fast, and where he wants to travel. The ultimate challenge is the successful matching of these individual maps and travel plans within the



organizational world. And, it is the dual responsibility of both the individual and the organization to try to achieve such an accommodating result.





TABLE 1: Correlations of Design Features  
With Overall Work Satisfaction

Design Feature	Correlation With Work Satisfaction
Skill Variety	.19*
Task Identity	.18*
Task Significance	.21*
Autonomy	.23*
Feedback from Job	.20*
-----	
Feedback from Agents	.26*
-----	
Promotion Fairness	.34*

N=2084

\*  $p < .01$



TABLE 2: Correlations with Overall Work Satisfaction for Different Job Longevity Periods

Design Feature	Correlations With Work Satisfaction										
	.03	.22	.12	.22*	.29*	.29*	.14*	.17*	.15	-.01	-.11
Skill Variety											
Task Identity	.13	.33*	.17	.21*	.29*	.14	.16*	.29*	.12	-.08	.11
Task Significance	.39*	.29*	.21*	.38*	.33*	.16	.23*	.20*	.23*	.07	-.04
Autonomy	-.21	.26*	.29*	.35*	.37*	.30*	.20*	.26*	.17*	.06	.00
Feedback from Job	.32*	.27*	.33*	.21*	.29*	.27*	.24*	.23*	.25*	.08	.11
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Feedback from Agents	.28	.28*	.39*	.30*	.25*	.35*	.25*	.27*	.25*	.25*	.25*
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Promotion Fairness	.30	.30*	.37*	.31*	.41*	.41*	.37*	.33*	.40*	.21*	.24*
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Job Longevity Period =	<3 Mos.	4-6 Mos.	7-12 Mos.	13-18 Mos.	19-24 Mos.	2-3 Yrs.	3-5 Yrs.	5-10 Yrs.	10-15 Yrs.	15-20 Yrs.	>20 Yrs.
N =	55	90	172	174	112	184	366	455	187	129	160

\* P < .01



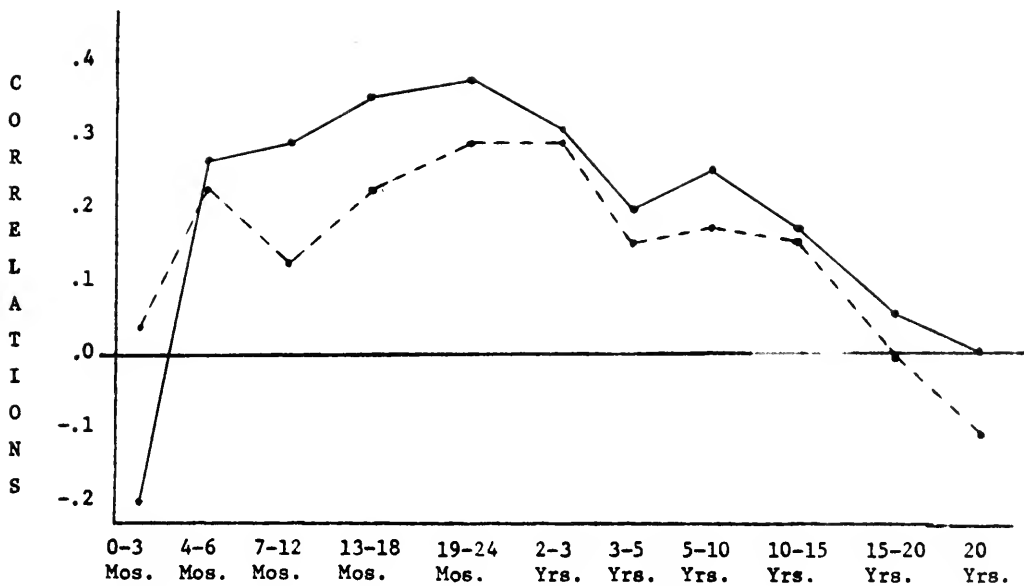


FIGURE 1: Correlations Between Overall Work Satisfaction and Skill Variety and Autonomy for Different Job Longevity Periods.

Note: --- = Correlations for Skill Variety  
 — = Correlations for Autonomy



TABLE 3: Correlations With Overall Work Satisfaction  
 For Respondents In Either A Socialization or  
 Re-Socialization Setting

Design Feature	Correlations With		Work Satisfaction			
	Novices	Veterans	Novices	Veterans		
Skill Variety	-.09	.03	.31*	-.04	.15	.09
Task Identity	.01	.30	.38*	.40*	.14	.18
Task Significance	.35*	.13	.43*	-.05	.19	.25*
Autonomy	-.43*	-.05	.32*	.41*	.29*	.24*
Feedback from Job	.22	.56*	.28*	.26	.23*	.48*
Feedback from Agents	.40*	.43*	.29*	.23	.22*	.54*
Promotion Fairness	.39*	.33	.22	.29	.38*	.46*
Current Job Longevity =	(0-3 months)		(4-6 months)		(7-12 months)	
N =	22	21	40	29	64	60

\* P < .05





## Footnotes

1. These reviews emphasize the current state of dysphoria by showing that the vast majority of workers would not willfully decide to re-select the same line of work. Furthermore, increases in alcoholism, drug usage, sabotage, crime, and absenteeism as well as decreases in production quality, family stability, and mental health are all purportedly linked with widespread work dissatisfaction. The dominant thesis is that ample remuneration, secure employment, and pleasant working conditions cannot by themselves dissipate the ubiquitous ailments known as blue-collar "blues" and white-collar "woes", for satisfaction is directly influenced by the amount of autonomy, variety, and responsibility in addition to the chances for personal growth, achievement, and contribution. Consequently, young workers tend to be the most disenchanting demographic group not because of a corrosion in their work ethic or assiduousness, but because they are less accepting of their doltish and inane chores.
2. Some of the more well-known cases have been conducted at the Gaines Dog Food Plant, American Telephone and Telegraph, Texas Instruments, Procter and Gamble, TRW Systems, and Volvo. Glaser (1975) provides brief individual case histories of some twenty successful attempts at job redesign.
3. Reactions from managers typically stress the uniqueness of their own circumstances. For instance, a hypothetical but representative manager might say: "Sure, job enrichment worked fine in Company X, but it would not work for us because our situation is not comparable. Our jobs are not as amenable to change or enrichment, our technology is intractable and precludes redesign, or simply our problems are not as serious, for automation will soon eliminate the troublesome tasks." Thus, it is the inability to build from diverse case studies that deters most managers from trying it and keeps about half of the adventuresome few from being successful with it.
4. Skill variety, task identity, and task significance span the state of experienced meaningfulness; autonomy covers experienced responsibility;



4. while feedback from job taps the state called knowledge of results.
5. There are theoretical views of satisfaction that either do not encompass or believe in such career fluctuations. For example, Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory of satisfaction claims that the determinants of satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not only distinct but also remain constant throughout one's work life.
6. A more thorough and comprehensive discussion of career stages and the socialization process can be found in Van Maanen and Schein (1975).
7. On the supposition that there may be sex-linked differences, especially for older women returning to work, only the male respondents are used in the forthcoming analysis.
8. With a sample size as large as the one utilized in this table, statistical significance has very little meaning (i.e., virtually all correlations even slightly above or below the zero level are significant). The arguments reported throughout this paper, therefore, rest upon the patterns in which the data fall as well as upon the logic underpinning the research questions asked.
9. Basically, this is the same pattern of results reported by Van Maanen and Katz (1974) with a different measure of overall satisfaction. That report, in addition to Hackman and Lawler's (1971) study, however, found that autonomy and skill variety were more related to general work satisfaction than the other three task dimensions of identity, significance, and feedback from job.
10. The argument here does not rest on statistically significant differences between correlations from every adjacent job longevity period but rather on the existence of a clear and unambiguous pattern of correlational results.
11. These findings are based on the responses of employees from a wide range of occupations and careers. A study is currently underway by Van Maanen and Katz to determine the stability of these results over different career groupings.



12. A brief realistic example might serve to exemplify the problem. In a casual conversation with the Vice-President of personnel, a young factory worker commented that he was quite satisfied with his employment. The pay was comparatively high, working conditions were pleasant, and the supervision was good. He had no complaints about his present job. His father, uncle, and many friends had all worked at the factory, and he was perfectly content with his relative position or status. However, what was recently bothering him, or more appropriately "scaring" him, was the thought that for the next 35 years, he would be entering the same building and going up the same stairs to the same room, to the same machinery, to do the same job! At the time, the Vice-President was about to start a job enrichment program. Having listened to this employee, however, he suddenly realized that his job redesign effort was seriously deficient, for it did not touch on career related concerns.



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